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THE  
ROYAL CAPTIVES.

A

TRAGEDY.

କାନ୍ତାରାଜାରାଜାରାଜାରାଜାରାଜାରାଜାରାଜାରାଜା  
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Price 1 s. 6 d.

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T H E

# Royal CAPTIVES.

A

## TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the

NEW THEATRE

IN THE

*H A Y - M A R K E T.*

---

*O felix una ante alias Priameia virgo,  
Hostilem ad tumulum Trojæ sub mænibus altis  
Fusca mori !* ——————

VIRG.

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LONDON:

Printed by E. SAY for the AUTHOR. 1729.

2112



## THE P R E F A C E.



HERE never was, I believe, any Piece, that more needed a Defence than this, nor any Author less able or less willing to defend his own Works than myself. Therefore without making any impertinent apology for my Errors, I shall submit it to the judgment of the candid Reader; Candid I call him, because I hope he will be so to the incorrect Performance of so injudicious an Age as sixteen, at which this Play was wrote.

IT may probably be ask'd, how I came to undertake such a thing, when the same Subject has already been chosen for an *English* Tragedy? All that I can say to that is, that I never heard of that Play, 'till I had made a considerable Progress in this. The Gentleman that wrote, or rather translated that Play (for excepting the first Scene, there's hardly a thought of his own, but all *Euripides's*;) This Gentleman, I say, seems to have been of the Opinion of *Rapin* and

Mr.

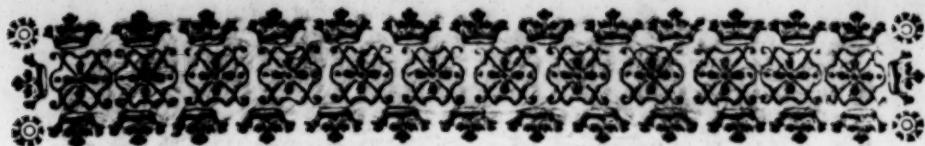
## The P R E F A C E.

Mr. Rymer, that Love is beneath the dignity of a Tragedy : but (as a good modern Critick observes) if *Virgil* did not think it beneath the dignity of his Heroic Poem, how can it be beneath that of a Tragedy, which certainly does not exceed the Epic Poem in Dignity ?

IN the disposition of the Incidents of the Plot I have follow'd *Euripides* ; yet not in a servile manner ; but have sometimes boldly ventur'd to leave the Steps of so great a Master, in compliance with the Humour of the present Age. Still I have endeavour'd to keep so close to his way of writing as to avoid all turgid Expressions, and bombast Flights.

THIS Play had the misfortune of being perform'd very imperfectly : some Scenes were left out, and others so intolerably mangled, that 'twas impossible for any body to make any thing of it. Therefore tho' I confess, that so incorrect a Work can't bear the test of a serious Perusal ; yet I print it to let the Town see, that I did not write such incoherent Nonsense as the Players acted.

T H E



# THE PROLOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

**O**F all those Arts which antient Times can boast,  
Of all that Learning, which to us is lost,  
Athens Chief Mistress reign'd, — And reigning  
Each virtuous Man exalted to a God : [show'd  
Her Tragick Scenes with matchless Art display'd  
Vice justly punish'd, and Jove's Will obey'd :  
The antient Demigods from death reviv'd  
Again their Battles fought, again they liv'd :  
From hence Euripides his Praises drew ;  
His Model just, and all his Colours true.  
Brave Hector's Death has call'd forth many a Tear,  
And Priam's Fall has wounded ev'ry Ear :  
Strip'd of her Pomp to night there shall be seen  
The falling Grandeur of a captive Queen ;  
And what may more your kind compassion move,  
Courage and Virtue fire the Heroe's Love ;  
But yet so gen'rous Flames unhappy prove.  
Like a poor Lamb at the appointed time  
Led to the Altar for another's crime,  
The wretched Virgin falls a Sacrifice,  
And by her Wound th' ill-fated Heroe dies.  
Now if the Muse in humble strains shall flow,  
And neither rise too high nor sink too low ;  
Let no misjudging Tongue the Poet blame,  
He's this to say, — that Nature was his aim.

Drama-



# Dramatis Personæ.

## M E N.

|              |                      |
|--------------|----------------------|
| AGAMEMNON.   | Mr. <i>Hulett.</i>   |
| POLYMNESTOR. | Mr. <i>Gillow.</i>   |
| PYRRHUS.     | Mr. <i>Giffard.</i>  |
| PISISTRATUS. | Mr. <i>Hill.</i>     |
| ULYSSES.     | Mr. <i>Machin.</i>   |
| TALTHYBIUS.  | Mr. <i>Williams.</i> |

## W O M E N.

|           |                        |
|-----------|------------------------|
| HECUBA.   | Mrs. <i>Carter.</i>    |
| POLYXENA. | Mrs. <i>Purden.</i>    |
| IRIA.     | Mrs. <i>Mann.</i>      |
| BECELLA.  | Mrs. <i>Mountford.</i> |

*SCENE the Chersonesus of Thrace.*

THE



THE  
Royal CAPTIVES.

---

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE, *a wild Country, Polymnestor's Tent in view.*

POLYMNESTOR *solus.*



AIL to th' auspicious morn! — Rest  
all my fears  
In *Polydore's* deep grave. — This morn  
the sea  
Receiv'd his infant body; and this  
morn

His blood came rushing from the wound, my sword  
Had made, and gave me all his pond'rous treasures.  
The Obstacle's remov'd, the prize is mine.  
Rejoice then, *Polymnestor*; then let gladness  
Appear in ev'ry face. Banish the clouds  
That hang upon your brow. None bars your way  
To wealth: For *Priam's* dead, his son is dead,  
Sunk in the waves, and leaves no tracks behind,

B

Which

## 2 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Which may be backward trac'd, which may discover  
The author of his death. — Yet *Hecuba*  
His mother still survives. — What then? — She must  
Be carry'd captive to the *Grecian* Shore,  
And never know the fate of *Polydore*.

I hear a noise of feet. — Sure none can know it: --  
I did it on the solitary mountains,  
Where never human face is seen. — But what  
Do I fear? — I hope that I have acted safe.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* My Lord, the *Grecian* Chiefs are met in council  
To part the captives. — *Hecuba* is fall'n  
To sage *Ulysses*' lot; *Polyxena*  
The virtuous princess is a worthy prize  
To *Agamemnon*: those of meaner rank  
They're now disposing of. [Exit.

*Pol.* Methought at *Hecuba*'s name my soul did start  
With horror and confusion. — Still I tremble. —  
But shall I entertain a thought, that tends  
To my disquiet, while this shining ore  
So glitters in my eyes, and chears my heart?  
No, I will go; I'll spend the day in joy,  
And nought but pleasure shall my mind employ. [Exit.

*SCE NE changes to a Council.*

AGAMEMNON, PYRRHUS, ULYSSES.

*Enter to them TALTHYBIUS.*

*Tal.* My limbs yet tremble with their late surprize.  
— I've seen *Achilles*.

*Aga.* Seen *Achilles*! — Ha! — What say you?

*Tal.* Yes, with these very eyes myself beheld him  
This night, not long ago: All arm'd he was  
From head to foot. — The trembling earth began  
To shake and roar. — The sea too was disturb'd:  
The lofty woods shook their high heads: All nature  
Did

Did seem to suffer terrible convulsions :  
The gaping earth, after a dreadful groan,  
Open'd her hollow caverns, made a passage  
From *Erebus*' dark gloomy gulph, ev'n to  
These upper regions. — Shocking to behold !  
*Achilles'* shade appears, just as I've seen him  
Oft in his life-time. — While I stood amaz'd,  
In a hoarse accent spoke these Words I heard ;  
“ Whither d'ye go ? Where sail, ungrateful Greeks ?  
“ Why do you leave your Heroe's shade unhonour'd ?  
“ Revere my memory ; for know, that this  
“ Neglect of me may one day cost you dear :  
“ In gratitude obey my will ; and let  
“ *Polyxena* be offer'd to my manes  
“ By *Pyrrhus*' hand.” This said, he sunk down to  
The regions, whence he came, and vanish'd,  
The earth wide gaping to receive him in.

*Aga.* *Achilles'* shade demand *Polyxena* !  
Sure he was born to cross my will, and be  
A plague eternal to me : Indeed I hop'd  
His death cou'd have secur'd me from his insults ;  
But not that wound, which broke the thread of life,  
Can break his deathless enmity to me.  
By *Jove* and all the Gods I swear, that his  
Cruel demand shall not be satisfy'd. —  
Why should I yield to him ? — Am I a King  
To have my will controul'd ? — Must I submit ?  
Born to command must I, like slaves, obey ?  
Go tell your Heroe, *Agamemnon* scorns  
To own Superiours. — Can his merits claim  
Pre-eminence ? — Did e'er his darts wound deeper ?  
Did he appear more terrible in battle ?  
Or did his sword with greater force cut thro'  
An host of armed foes ? — Why then should I  
Truckle to his commands against my will ?

*Pyrr.* O angry resolute prince ! Is this, is this  
A due reward for a whole life spent in  
The toils of war ? Did great *Achilles* then

Serve you, and fight in your defence for this ?  
 Was it for this he met a certain death ? —  
 You know that when his Goddess mother had  
 Reveal'd to him the fate's decree ; that if  
 He lent his aid to *Greece*, and dar'd to cross  
 The watry main to the siege of *Ilium*,  
 Short was his destin'd life ; at *Troy* he'd die,  
 And never would return : but if he would  
 Avoid that danger, then might he outlive  
 The antient *Pylian* sage : Yet so he lov'd  
 The cause of *Greece*, and so contemned life,  
 That with the *Grecian* army hither he came,  
 Certain of death ; and dy'd there. — Not to mention  
 His other infinite deserts ; the Death  
 Of *Hector* was sufficient ; he alone  
 Did more than the whole league of *Greece* united :  
 Cou'd *Troy* be taken before *Hector*'s death ?  
 Cou'd any conquer *Hector* but *Achilles* ?  
 Thus did *Achilles* o'ercome *Troy*, while you  
 Only demolish'd it. — If he had ask'd  
 A virgin from *Mycenæ* or from *Argos*  
 Free, born in *Greece*, you could not have deny'd it  
 In justice or in honour : Can you then  
 Refuse him *Priam*'s daughter, but a captive,  
 An Enemy's and a Barbarian's offspring ?

*Aga.* What d'you command ? d'you claim is as  
 your right ?

Know then, that *Agamemnon*'s Actions  
 Are subject to his will alone. He can  
 Contemn your threats, and them reject with scorn.  
 Yet still he's justice and he's gratitude. —  
 If your dead father did deserve aught of me  
 I freely will repay it him.  
 But pray what were this mighty man's deserts ?  
 He always firmly oppos'd what I resolv'd ;  
 Ever my enemy, but ne'er my friend :  
 What tho' *Achilles* might have spent a long,  
 Obscure, inglorious, coward's life at home

## The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

5

In ease and plenty? What tho' he did dare  
To meet his death at *Troy*? Was't not his shame  
That drove him hither? Would not his name be  
branded  
With cowardice, had he declin'd the War?  
Love to *Greece* was a specious pretence;  
But here's the source of all his boasted courage.  
Witness his putting on a woman's habit  
To hide the Heroe from the world and danger.  
You say, that he alone cou'd lay great *Hector*  
Prostrate in dust. But then did *Hector* fall  
Because he was an Enemy to *Greece*?  
His enmity to *Hector* was revenge  
For young *Patroclus*' Death. He hated us  
More ev'n than *Troy* itself, and never would  
Lift up his sword in our defence, tho' he  
Had seen all *Greece* fall in an undistinguish'd ruin.  
Then how does gratitude oblige me to  
Perform his bloody will? — For there can be  
No bonds of gratitude when there have been  
No benefits receiv'd. — Then I deny  
To sacrifice the virgin he demanded;  
My will and pleasure is my reason for't.

*Ul.* Let us not, Princes, after foreign wars  
Are over, and have ceas'd to hurt our quiet,  
Yet marr the joys of victory and triumph  
By home sedition and domestick feuds.  
Of you, *Atrides*, with a due observance  
Of that your sov'reign seat and regal pow'r,  
I beg performance of the ghost's request.  
Consider all your conquests, all your glories,  
How your great name shines throughout all the  
world,  
Remotest nations celebrate your courage,  
Admire your conduct, and applaud your actions.  
Let not your former glories all be stain'd  
With the foul blot of such unkindnes to  
So brave a *Grecian*. He, that's truly great,

Shou'd

## 6 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Shou'd you refuse these honours to his shade,  
The vile censorious World will say, you envy'd  
Admires, and loves, and honours too the brave.—  
So great a man his merited esteem.

O if you love your fame, as all the brave do,  
Deny not this the Heroe's last request.

*Aga.* To your superiour wisdom, sage *Ulysses*,  
Do I submit myself: Be it, as you  
Direct and give advice. — In all my actions  
May I be guided by the good and wise;  
And still subject my nat'r al fiery temper  
To their grave conduct and most useful council.

[*Exeunt.*

*SCENE*, before AGAMEMNON's Tent.

*PISISTRATUS solus.*

This beauteous maid, this ruler of my heart  
Seems unconcern'd, and cold, and little answers  
My fervent passion; indifference holds  
The ballance of her heart; while my unequal'd love,  
Ev'n like the ever-burning fire of *Phæbus*,  
Heats with one constant unextinguish'd flame.  
Whene'er I look upon her beauties, then  
My ravish'd soul bounds with a sudden joy,  
I'm charm'd and make myself her willing slave.  
Whene'er she speaks then my transported senses  
Forget their office, then my voice is lost,  
Then my whole frame is put in wild disorder.

*Enter POLYXENA.*

See how her beauty shines! See how it charms!  
O let me ever thus, thus gaze upon thee,  
Nor let such heav'nly joys cease but with life.  
Thou art my only aim. Thou art the sole  
Blessing my heart, my longing heart aspires to.—  
Whatever place is brighten'd by thy presence

There

## The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

7

There is my happiness, and there my heav'n.—

O my *Polyxena*! delay no longer

Our mutual joys! Let the Priest join

Our willing hands, and love our faithful hearts.

*Pol.* Heav'n has design'd for thee, young Prince,  
a bride

Happier than lost *Polyxena*; whom fortune  
Has ever smil'd on, and all whose desires  
Success has crown'd. Thy better fates forbid  
Thy taking to thy arms a slave; for such  
Is the unhappy state of *Priam*'s daughter.

*Pis.* Think not, O think not, fairest of thy sex,  
That riches, greatness, courts, or gaudy pomp  
Are th' objects of my love; no, my heart burns  
With flames more gen'rous.— Virtue join'd with  
beauty

Render each other more resplendent.— These,  
These charms alone enchant my am'rous heart.  
In thy captivity thou appear'st more fair,  
Thy sorrows add a lustre to thy beauty,  
And make thy virtues shew themselves more brightly.

*Pol.* O think (alas!) on wretched *Hecuba*;  
See how she sinks beneath her weight of woes!  
O let me not still heap new sorrows on her,  
Nor let her pine away in grief for me.

*Pis.* Resentless maid!— Do you remain unmov'd  
To see my heaving sighs and throbbing heart?

*Pol.* Consider the confusion and the trouble  
Which our ill-fated loves would bring on both  
Our much offended parents; your displeas'd  
Stern sire would heap his curses on you, that  
You have dishonoured the noble race  
Whence you derive your origine, by making  
An humble slave the partner of your bed:  
While poor distressed *Hecuba*— alafs!  
Methinks I see her tear her aged hairs,  
I hear her pray'rs from heav'n draw curses on me;  
The list'ning Gods comply, and I am yet

More

## 8 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

More wretched; for now shou'd I lose  
Heav'n for my guide, and innocence my guard.—  
O think, think what dire punishments the Gods  
Immortal have in store for such ungrateful,  
Rebelling children: Think on 'em, and dread 'em.  
'Tis time we part. Farewel *Pisistratus*. [Exit.

*Pis.* Stay, stay, bright maid, leave me with  
better hopes.

—She's gone, and with her the joys are fled,  
That life can e'er afford my troubled soul. [Exit.

*SCENE continues.*

*Enter IRIA and BECILLA.*

*Ir.* How doubly wretched is the wife of *Priam*!  
Her life is spent in groans, and sighs, and tears.  
By the remembrance of her former ills  
She bears 'em all again. E'en ev'ry moment  
Old *Troy* is taken in her troubled mind.  
What little time she sleeps is fill'd with horrour.  
This night, when her unequal'd grief permitted her  
To take a moment's rest, she rose affrighted,  
And pointing to a corner of the tent,  
Cry'd, Is *Achilles* risen from the dead  
Yet to torment me? —

*Bec.* Somuch her soul's disturb'd by her misfortunes,  
That ev'n in sleep her fancy forms to her  
These dreadful visions, and the weight of woes,  
She bears, lays open to her such a scene  
Of horrour, as keeps gentle sleep away  
From sealing up her wearied eyes; while ease  
And comfort are quite strangers to her breast,  
Her troubled breast. Sometimes her grief is silent,  
Then does she seem so swell'd with sorrow, that  
Unless with speaking and bewailing, she  
Gave her heart ease, 'twou'd burst.

*Ir.* Methinks in her I see the very picture  
Of black despair, and bitter discontent.—

But

## The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 9

But hold—she rises from her bed, she starts,  
And glares around with horrour and amazement.

[*Exeunt.*

HECUBA *within.*

Good *Iria* direct the wand'ring steps,  
Support the old and feeble limbs of your  
Distressed Queen, or rather should I say,  
Your fellow slave.

*Enter HECUBA supported by Women, and IRIA.*

*Hec.* O *Jove*, that dwell'st above the starry skies,  
And thou, O venerable Goddess Night,  
Why am I frightened with nocturnal phantoms,  
And dreadful apparitions? — O suggestion!  
Why wilt thou thus torment me? — *Polydore*  
My only son! my fears for thee seem to  
Unfold the hidden mysteries of fate.—  
My restless mind labours with anxious thoughts  
For my *Polyxena*. — Yet whence proceed  
These most ill-grounded fears? The *Greeks* have  
done  
Their worst. They've made us slaves. Fortune  
has spent  
Her quiver of misfortune on us. — We can fall  
No lower than we are. We've nought to fear,  
Nothing to lose, nothing to hope for.—  
Then hence all these tormenting fears; be gone,  
I give you to the winds; no more disturb me.—

[*after a pause.*

But yet what doubts, and what anticipations  
Of future troubles is my mind perplex'd with?  
In spite of all my resolutions,  
A dread of some misfortune, that will happen  
To my *Polyxena*, affrights my soul,  
And makes me tremble at I know not what.—

C

*Enter*

10 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Enter BECILLA.

*Bec.* O Madam! Thrice unhappy! How, in  
what words

Shall I relate the most unwelcome tidings,  
Of which I am th' unwilling messenger?  
I come with heavy heart to tell you news,  
Which strike all comfort dead.—I have been told,  
In the dead waft and middle of the night,  
When near *Achilles'* Tomb some *Greeks* did hold  
The watch; a figure, like their great *Achilles*,  
Rises before 'em in bright arms adorn'd,  
And ask'd (O who can bear to tell the tale  
Without a troubled heart, and eyes o'erflowing?)  
Ask'd for *Polyxena* to be his victim.  
Some princes wou'd obey his harsh commands,  
While others did oppose it, 'till at length  
*Ulysses*, rising from his seat, persuaded  
With cursed and inhuman arts, and chang'd  
The resolution of the princes. Thus  
They all unanimously did consent,  
That your *Polyxena* should bleed t' appease  
The haughty Heroe's ghost.

*Ir.* See where stands a monument of sorrow?  
Her senses are benumb'd, her reason gone.—  
O Royal Mistress, vent your troubles, give  
Your sorrows ease, lest your heart burst with grief.

*Bec.* A sudden horror seems to chill her spirits;  
She's silent, and she cannot speak. Small sorrows  
Do give us leisure to complain of them;  
But greater griefs, like her's, express in groans  
What they can't utter.—Thou once *Ajia's* Queen,  
Let patience cool the raging of thy grief;  
Let not thy troubles make thy suff'ring soul  
Insensible; but learn, endeavour  
To bear misfortunes bravely, as becomes thee.

*Hec.* Oh! Oh! Oh! [faints.]

*Bec.* Wretch that I am! What have I done?

This

## The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 11

This dreadful tale has stab'd her to the heart.—  
But ha ! See she recovers, and the vital blood,  
Which had forsook her face again returns.

[*Hecuba* recovers.]

Go lay yourself at *Agamemnon*'s feet ;  
Haste to the altars of the Gods, implore  
Their kind assistance; for 'tis they alone  
Can turn the hearts of these inhuman men  
To mercy and compassion ; else must you  
See your fair daughter all besmear'd with blood,  
Her beauteous limbs distain'd with gore.

*Hec.* Propitious Gods forbid ! — What tongue,  
what words can

Express the anguish of my drooping soul ?  
Who will defend me from these cruel men ?  
What kingdom or what city will receive me ?  
All will reject the wretched *Hecuba*,  
Despis'd of all ! sunk in calamities !  
Whate'er my mind can think, sets to my view  
Troubles and servitude, and all the ills,  
Under which wretched Mortals use to groan.  
Wou'd my sad soul call back to her remembrance  
Her kingdom ? — that is sack'd by hostile hands,  
And levell'd with the ground : I saw't destroy'd  
With these my aged eyes, and burnt to ashes.  
Or do my griefs fit light upon my heart,  
That I've a daughter left me yet, that's sav'd  
From a whole ruin'd empire ? — She is lost,  
For ever to be griev'd for. — Thus let me  
Think on whate'er I will, it tends to make me  
Wretched. — How shall I fly these endless troubles ?  
Which way shall I avoid 'em ?

*Ir.* See how she stands distracted in her mind ;  
Environ'd with misfortunes, rack'd with fears ;  
Lost in despair, and stupify'd with grief !

*Hec.* The light that shines in on me seems  
unpleasant,  
I long to leave it. — Haste my daughter, hear

12 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

The overflowings of a troubled heart.

Enter POLYXENA.

*Pol.* What mean these tears? and what these words  
of sorrow?

What new misfortune are we yet to suffer?

Why with such doleful accents do you call me?

Why do you thus affright me, fearful as

Some tender bird, that dreads the eagle's coming?

*Hec.* O my child!

[sighs.]

*Pol.* Declare your grief.—Is your *Polyxena*  
Thought an unworthy partner of your sorrows?  
Discharge on me that heavy load of grief,  
That so depresses you; I'll bear it all,  
And ease you of the weight.

*Hec.* Hear it, and dread it, my *Polyxena*.  
The Grecian army have decreed, that you  
Should fall a sacrifice to stern *Achilles'* shade.

*Pol.* O dreadful message! — Dire unheard of  
sorrows!

Afflictions, that would rend the hardest heart!  
Troubles immense encompas you around,  
Nor will your child be spar'd, the only comfort  
Which your hard fates have left you in misfortunes.  
Yes, I must go

To the tremendous gloom of *Pluto's* realms,  
There to be reproach'd among the shades below  
With having dy'd a slave.—Yet is not this  
What I lament; grim death I do not fear,  
Most dire reproaches willingly I bear;  
The greatest ills, that e'er can fall on me,  
I readily despise, and only mourn for thee.

*The End of the first Act.*

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

POLYXENA *sola.*

D EATH is the wretch's refuge ; there th' unhappy,  
And there alone, can bid adieu to trouble :  
Yet I, oppress'd with an unusual weight  
Of woes, am depriv'd ev'n of that privilege,  
Common to all the wretched ; for altho'  
I fly this world, yet do I leave behind  
A mourning parent ; that, that mixes gall  
With the sweet draught of death ; for what  
Is life to me, when liberty is lost ?  
Can I go fawn, can I careſs the men,  
That drench'd their hands in all my kindred's blood ?

*Enter PISISTRATUS.*

*Pis.* Joy of my soul ! All that my heart can wish !  
The Gods best gift ! Hah ! What do I see ? What  
mean  
Those looks of grief ? Why rise those tender  
breasts  
With heaving sighs ? — And will you not grant me  
But one propitious smile ? — Why wilt thou croſs,  
And thwart my eager passion with a look  
So cold, and so disorder'd ?

*Pol.* Dost thou expect, *Pisistratus*, to find  
Joy in the midſt of sorrow, or to ſee  
The troubled daughter of affliction chearful ?

*Pis.* Give to the winds these melancholy thoughts,  
And let our cares be how to ſpend our time  
In soft extatrick joys, and mutual love.

*Pol.*

## 14 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

*Pol.* Love is excluded from my breast for ever.  
That fills the thoughts of prosp'rous maids ; but  
grief

Engrosses my whole soul, and guards my heart,  
Nor suffers it to feel an am'rous warmth.—  
I am abandon'd to the world, and death  
Alone can clear my mind, alone dispel  
The clouds of sadness, that hang on my brow.

*Pis.* O leave these words of grief and death.—  
Because

You once was wretched will you always be so ?  
Will you refuse a profer'd happiness ?

*Pol.* No ; I no more will raise my drooping head,  
But bend my weeping eyes still prone to earth,  
'Till death shall bid my grief and life to cease.

*Pis.* Why dost thou still go on in this sad strain ?  
And speak in such a piteous accent, as  
May even move th' inexorable fates  
To change their fix'd decrees in pity to you ?  
Tell me thy grievance.—Why does that dejected  
Countenance seem t' endeavour to conceal  
Those bright resplendent charms ? Who is't has  
wrong'd thee ?

O haste to let me know ; that I with wings  
As swift as time, and eager as the thoughts  
Of an impatient lover, quick may fly  
To reek my vengeance on the base offender.

*Pol.* *Pyrrhus* demands my blood to satiate his  
Imperious cruel father's greedy ghost.

*Pis.* Heav'ns ! What do I hear ? — What horrid  
tale

Is it that frights and stupifies my sense ?  
Demand thee for a sacrifice ! — It can not  
It shall not be. — Surely my ears deceiv'd me.—  
Was it the fair *Polyxena* that said so ?

It must be true then. — yet it cannot be.

*Pyrrhus* was once my friend : He wou'd not, dare not  
Affront

[*after a pause.*

## The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 15

Affront a soldier, and his friends too thus.

*Pol.* That he requires me for his father's victim  
Doubt not: believe your hearing, and be not  
Astonished and thus amazed at it:—  
But think, think how this bloody cruel action  
May be prevented; summon up to your  
Assistance all your arts, and these employ,  
(Better you can't employ 'em) to protect  
The innocent from th' hands of their oppressors.

*Pis.* By heav'ns thou'ft fir'd my eager soul, that  
tho'  
A thousand dangers did obstruct my passage,  
I'd break thro' all to bring you some relief.  
When such an heav'nly form, join'd with such  
virtue,  
Is injured; what ears can be so deaf,  
What heart be so obdurate and so lost  
To pity (the best part of us) as not  
To burn with a desire of redressing  
The wrongs which it has suffer'd?

*Pol.* Prince, spend not  
These pretious moments; while you speak, the  
chiefs

Become more resolute to execute  
What they've decreed. Delay no longer then.

*Pis.* What must we part then? yes; but as it is  
To meet again more happily, I'll not  
Repine at my hard fate. This motive then,  
And this alone will make me quit thy presence.  
On any other terms I cou'd as soon  
Consent to be depriv'd the liberty  
Of th' open air, of breathing, or of living;  
For what is breath, or life, or being without thee?  
But why do' I idly spend the time, when I  
Doubt whether thy life (which my soul holds dearer  
Than riches, honour, glory, liberty)  
Be safe?

Who

## 16 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Who knows how near thy death is (racking thought!)

While I am thus neglectful of thy welfare?

I go then, and 'till I return, may all

The tutelar deities protect you, and

All happiness attend you.

[exit.]

*Pol.* Well! — If I must die, this may be my comfort;

Where e'er my soul shall be transported to,

What ever world it shall inhabit after

By death 'tis separated from the body,

It can't be more unhappy, it can't suffer

Greater misfortunes than on earth it has. —

But yet what pleasures can my soul e'er relish

Divided from my parent? What delights

Can blest *Elysium* afford me, absent

From *Hecuba*, yet conscious of her woes?

Thus life and death are equal miseries.

In life my own unhappiness torments me,

In death my parents. — O most wretched state!

Where e'er I fly, my sorrows follow me.

In vain do I endeavour to escape

Pursuing grief; it ne'er deserts my mind,

And while I seek t' avoid, I haste to meet it.

### Enter PYRRHUS.

*Pyr.* Madam, I seldom see my friend *Pisistratus*;  
His mind's unbent from all a prince's office,  
And to us he lives, as if he liv'd not.

'Twas but this morn we miss'd him at the council.  
I'm told, that your too fatal charms have robb'd  
Us of *Pisistratus*, him of himself.

*Pol.* I shou'd be sorry, if my company  
Has so unfortunately pleas'd him, as  
To make the brave young prince neglect his duties.

*Pyr.* I am his friend; as such, I come to tell him,  
He's much to blame thus to neglect the care  
Of

Of all his people to indulge his passion.

*Pol.* Heaven forbid, that I should be the cause  
Of 's people's suff'ring, or his love to me  
Shou'd of the chiefs deserve the name of crime.

*Pyr.* Love's an infirmity, and not a crime.  
Valour and virtuous love in one united  
Inflame each other with more gen'rous fires.  
Love spurs the Heroe on to great atchievements ;  
And valour crown'd with victory (returning  
From the bloody field in Beauty's arms) receives  
The just reward of all its glorious wounds.  
But if we suffer love quite to subdue us,  
And to incroach upon our serious hours,  
It swells t' a fault. — Of this I'd warn my friend.

*Pol.* My death, Sir, which I hourly expect, will  
put  
An end to all these discontents among you.

*Pyr.* This too I'd let him know, that what he  
loves

He cannot long enjoy ; he then must try  
To wean himself of such a fruitless passion.

*Pol.* When I am dead, teach him to be content ;  
But don't reprove him in his rage, lest what  
Was love should end in madness or despair.

*Pyr.* But hold, he bends this way ; gloomy his  
aspect,  
His eyes fix'd on the ground ; he slowly moves :  
He's now not fit to take advice. — I'll go then.

[exit.]

Enter PISISTRATUS.

*Pol.* Speak not. — I know my fate. — Too well  
(alas !)

Thy paleness tells thy message : The sorrow  
Thy face expresses better can inform me,  
That your request's rejected by the Greeks,  
Than the much more faint narrative of words.

*Pis.* O burst my heart ! my soul is swell'd with grief

D

Lab'ring

## 18 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Lab'ring for vent, even as winds pent up,  
And in th' earth's hollow cavities confin'd.

*Pol.* Farewel my mother, yes a long farewell.  
The cruel Greeks insult our miseries.

*Pis.* Goddess of Love, mother of gay desires,  
Your wretched suppliant implores your aid ;  
If e'er you favour'd a despairing youth,  
Or lent assistance to a faithful lover,  
O gentle Goddess, hear this my request,  
Answer my pray'rs ; and let 'em not ascend  
Unheeded : O inspire me with some quick  
And apt expedient to prevent the storm  
Of fate that threatens us with present ruin. —  
While time's our own, let's use it ; let us fly [to Pol.  
This hated shore, avoid th' impending danger,  
And in some foreign region spend in love  
The remnant of our days. — Come, haste we, while  
we may.

*Pol.* Better to die ten thousand deaths, than to  
Accept of life on terms so base and mean :  
For nobleness of birth ceases to be  
Most truly honourable, when the person  
Nobly descended leaves the paths of virtue  
Trod by his valiant ancestors. — That honour  
Is most to be esteem'd, which we derive  
From our own merits, not what we receive  
From our forefathers. Then if I forsake  
My virtue, I am not to be distinguish'd  
From the ignoble crowd. They live, they breath,  
And draw fresh air as I do. This alone  
A true contempt of death can show the world,  
That *Priam's* daughter's not degenerate.

*Pis.* Courage unparalleled ! —  
With dread, amazement, horror, and confusion,  
I must commend this fatal, rigid virtue,  
That in its consequence destroys me. — O earth !  
O heav'ns ! What shall I do ? Where find relief ?  
Why ye (hard-hearted Gods !) fill'd you my soul  
With

## The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 19

With amorous fond desires? — Did you design  
By disappointing 'em to make me wretched? —  
But what do I say? — Why does my wild,  
disorder'd,  
Distracted mind murmur at Heav'n's decree?  
Why stand I so? — What do I do? — Death to  
my fight!

*Ulysses* comes the messenger of fate. —  
I must be gone. — I cou'd not stay to see  
Thee drag'd to death. — Farewel, *Polyxena*,  
If e'er we meet again, 'twill be with better hopes.  
Once more farewell. — Heav'n guard thy innocence.

[*exeunt.*]

Enter *ULYSSES* and *HECUBA* from different doors.

*Ul.* You can't be ignorant of what *Greece* decrees:  
From the great *Agamemnon* am I sent  
Ambassador, to let you know your doom.  
The *Grecian* Princes claim *Polyxena*,  
To purple o'er with her devoted blood  
An altar rais'd in honour of the manes  
Of the immortal son of *Peleus*. —  
Without a vain resistance then deliver  
Her up into our hands; you know t' oppose  
The *Grecian* Princes will wou'd be to strive  
Against a rapid torrent bearing down  
Men, countries, regions, kingdoms, all before it. —  
Suppress your swelling and immod'rate grief;  
What is beyond your power learn to make  
Without your care: Know that the Fates decree's  
Irrevocable; and no sword at *Troy*,  
No fire, no enemy cou'd have destroy'd you,  
Before that you had bore the destin'd ills,  
Which you were born to suffer. — Don't repine;  
You may lament, but cannot change your doom  
By sighs or tears, or any acts of grief.  
They're useless all, and quite extravagant.

*Hec.* Now is the great, the fatal hour arriv'd,

D 2

Big

20 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Big with unusual woe. — O greatest loss,  
That ever the most miserable bore !  
An only daughter, the sole relict of  
A ruin'd kingdom ! — How, how oft (alas !)  
When I have little thought her death so near,  
Have I with grateful voice bless'd my good stars,  
That I had such a daughter left ! Yet is she torn,  
Torn from my longing arms and banish'd thither,  
Whence she will ne'er return, will ne'er re-visit  
Her wretched parent, and partake her woes.  
Why do the Gods prolong my life in torment ?  
I have no use for life, it is my burthen. —  
Methinks I wander in a lonesome desart ;  
Methinks I see all savages around me ;  
No human form appears, to sooth my cares,  
And lull my anxious thoughts with soft compassion :  
I, as a most unfit inhabitant  
For such a joyless place, I beg the Gods,  
But beg in vain, that they'd direct my steps  
Straight to some hospitable dome, where I  
May find some comfort in a kind reception.

*Ul.* O *Hecuba*, lament no more. — You'll find  
in me

An easy master. I will never add  
To your misfortunes. 'Tis *Achilles'* ghost,  
That asks the death of your *Polyxena* :  
Can we deny so great an Heroe what  
His shade demands ? — The world might justly  
accuse us

And call us in a gen'ral voice ungrateful.

*Hec.* But hear, *Ulysses*, O vouchsafe to hear  
The words of the distrefs'd. — Pity, assist me.  
O give me cause to bless you. — Shew but mercy  
On my *Polyxena*, and while I have  
The use of voice, it e'er shall call thee noble. —  
Mercy's a brighter ornament to Kings  
Than crowns and scepters ; these shall soon be funk  
In dark oblivion ; but acts of mercy

Shall

## The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 21

Shall live as long as time itself, immortal  
As the great Gods, whose attribute it is.—  
True fortitude consists not in subduing,  
But in forgiving, and in sparing foes.  
If man's chief excellence were but to conquer,  
And treat inhumanly the conquered,  
He differs not from beasts, nor does deserve  
A better name than they ; the hardy lyon  
Thro' the wild forest seeks his prey, he catches,  
Kills, and devours it : if man does no more,  
Why is he call'd the head of the creation ?

*Ul.* Mistake not friends for Enemies, *Hecuba* ;  
I am your friend, and think me not your foe.—  
Mercy, I grant, shou'd teach to spare your daughter,  
But less ties shou'd of course give place to greater.  
What tho' my tender heart compassionates  
Your wretched state ? yet does my gratitude  
Tell me ; what e'er *Achilles* shall command,  
My will ought to obey, and give performance.

*Hec.* O talk not thus, *Ulysses* ; 'tis not pity  
To me, but an obedience to the Gods,  
Forbids this bloody and inhuman action :  
As they are merciful they hate the cruel.

*Ul.* 'Tis certain, that the Gods will be displeas'd,  
Shou'd we deny discharging these last duties  
Due to so great a chief ; Ingratitude and  
Obedience to the Gods can never be the same.  
Consider, how much 'tis we owe *Achilles* ;  
By him our enemies were overcome ;  
By his right-hand our kingdom was protected ;  
'Twas he, that for his country bravely fought ;  
'Twas he at last, that by the undermining  
Arts of your son was treacherously murder'd.

*Hec.* O let my pray'rs, my tears, change your  
resolves ;  
Or let my daughter's sex, her innocence,  
Plead much in her behalf.— O mercy, heav'n !

*Ul.* Words can't prevail.— What *Greece* has once  
decreed It

22 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

It never will revoke ; but still remain  
Firm, fix'd, and constant to its purpose, sure,  
As the immutable decrees of fate.

*Hec.* O ye inexorable men ! Are these  
Are these your boasted virtues ? Is't for this,  
The nations all around are call'd Barbarians ?

*Ul.* *Hecuba*, no more.  
Surrender up your daughter, and resist not :  
You ask in vain, and you resist in vain.

Enter POLYXENA, IRIA, and BECILLA.

*Hec.* Daughter, my words fly upwards disregarded,  
Nor can they mollify th' obdurate heart  
Of this inhuman man. — O cruelty !

'Tis you alone, that reign within the hearts  
Of these, these unrelenting *Grecians*.

Mercy's no more on earth, but 's fled to heav'n,  
And dwells among th' immortal Gods alone. —

*Polyxena*, try thy persuasive arts,  
Go and embrace *Ulysses*' knees, and beg him,  
That he wou'd spare your life ; remind him too  
Of his own offspring, and he surely knows  
The parent's fondness for an only child,  
Their cares, their fears, and all their anxious  
thoughts.

*Pol.* Hard-hearted cruel man, he stands unmov'd  
At all our troubles ; never drops a tear,  
Nor shows one pitying look at our misfortunes. —  
*Ulysses*, you seem deaf to all the pray'rs  
Of the distress'd ; thou worse than senseless things :  
The beasts to thee compar'd are mild and gentle ;  
For there's no beast that ranges o'er the forest  
In quest of prey, so fierce, so wild, but has  
Some touch of pity ; but thou, thou hast none,  
And therefore art more barbarous than beasts. —  
Think not that fear of death can prompt me to  
Plead for my life ; for what is life to me ?  
I'll follow you, and chearfully resign

My

My breath; for to choose servitude and chains  
 Before an honourable death, discovers  
 A mean and grov'ling soul: Can then a princess,  
 Once educated in the shining pomp  
 And splendor of a court, ask for a life  
 Of Slavery? — A slave! — O heav'ns! — That name  
 First gave me resolution more than female,  
 And courage to contemn the sting of death.

*Hec.* Well then, *Ulysses*, if your stubborn mind  
 Is grown inflexible, and you remain  
 Res'lute to offer up an human victim  
 To dire *Achilles'* ghost; let but my daughter  
 Escape this hard, this cruel horrid fate;  
 I come a willing sacrifice; 'twas I,  
 That bore young *Paris*, *Paris* flew *Achilles*.

*Ul.* *Polyxena*'s demanded by the heroe;  
 If we don't offer her, we disobey him.

*Hec.* Then if my daughter must die, let us not  
 By death be separated, who in life  
 Were ne'er divided; but let us descend  
 Together to th' *Elysian* Shades, companions  
 In the last final journey.

*Ul.* Beg not your death of us, O *Hecuba*,  
 We grieve, that by necessity we're forc'd  
 To take thy daughter from thee; nor yet wou'd we  
 Do it, but that we owe so much to him  
 In gratitude.

*Hec.* What ever bonds of gratitude you break  
 For mercy's sake, the Gods will soon forgive:  
 This seeming vice becomes a real virtue.

*Pol.* Endeavour not, my wretched parent, to  
 Resist superiour pow'r and force; consider,  
 Tho' born to rule, we're now no more than slaves,  
 And subject to the haughty victor's insults. —  
 Now let us join our hands, which when once parted  
 Will never join again: behold your daughter  
 Laments her death, only because she leaves  
 You comfortless in life. — Farewel for ever,

I must

I must depart to everlasting night.

*Hec.* But I shall still remain in slavery,  
And on the earth here spend my future time  
In troubles never ending, 'till kind death  
Secures me from their insults.

*Pol.* Alas! my parent, how, how shall I leave thee?

*Hec.* Tho' thine is hard, mine is the harder fate.  
Leaving a wretched life and wretched parent,  
You fly t' a lasting stock of happiness;  
But I leave thee, and still remain in mis'ry.  
The fatal stroke of death falls heavier  
On the survivors, than on them that bear it;  
For grief, and tears, and sighs is left to those;  
These find a final rest from all misfortunes.

*Pol.* Farewel those arms, that have so oft embrac'd me:

My mother, happy be thy future hours;  
What, said I happy? That's beyond my hopes.  
But may'st thou (I beg of propitious heav'n)  
Be blest with all the comfort, that so wretched,  
And so dejected a condition can  
Admit of; may my brother *Polydore*  
Support thy feeble age in *Polymnestor's*  
Most wealthy court.

*Hec.* Ay, if he lives; but much I fear his safety.

*Pol.* He lives to close thy eyes, when thou shalt die.  
Farewel for ever. Heaven be thy guide,  
And comforter in all thy future life.

[*ULV S E S* leads her off.]

*Hec.* My grief is greater than e'er mortal knew;  
For all my comfort's fled away with you.  
Poor *Hecuba* lives, despairing of relief:  
Thrice happy they, whose fortune was so good,  
To end their lives under the walls of *Troy*,  
And with their lives their troubles.  
But O! How mis'able is *Hecuba*,  
Who's given up into the hands of foes,  
And subject made to servitude and bondage!

Why

## The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 25

Why dy'd I not with thee, my much-lov'd  
*Priam?*

Why left I not this life with thee, O *Hector*?  
Why do I yet endure the hardships, and  
The mis'ries of this world? Is't *Jove's* decree?  
Can *Jove* be pleased with tormenting me?  
Or is it the delight of heav'n to see  
Me the most miserable and afflicted?  
If not, why are all things so disordered,  
That they by consequence must heap new troubles  
Continual sorrows on my wretched head?  
Death is the pleasing lot I seek to draw;  
The grave's the home, which I am travelling to;  
And the dark shades of hell my place of rest.  
Then why do I yet live? Why plunge I not  
A sword into my breast? — But still, methinks  
I feel a sudden horror seizes me,  
When e'er I represent unto my mind  
The image of grim death; I wish my self  
Dead and departed from this tiresome life;  
Yea death I fear; I fear, but know not why.

*Ir.* O wretched queen have mercy on yourself;  
Vouchsafe to grant yourself a moment's ease;  
Let gentle comfort soothe this grief.— O try  
To raise your head amidst this sea of troubles.

*Hec.* Comfort's for persons much less miserable.  
A kingdom's, children's, and an husband's loss,  
Are griefs too great to be reliev'd by comfort.

*Ir.* Seek not those things which cannot be re-  
gain'd.

*Hec.* My only joy and hope is gone. Alas!  
The future time in sorrow I shall pass.  
So some strong lyon in the silent Woods,  
Where silver *Xanthus* glides in gentle floods,  
Seizes a tender fawn, and drags away  
Into his dreadful den his frightened prey;  
The wailing dam her dying young bemoans,  
Makes the woods ring with her repeated groans;

26 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

In ev'ry place is heard her trembling cry,  
She wanders up and down, and longs to die.

*The End of the second Act.*



ACT III. SCENE I.

*A Plain; Achilles' Tomb in view.*

Enter AGAMEMNON, PYRRHUS, TALTHYBIUS,  
and Soldiers.

Pyr. HERE, fill me up this goblet full of wine.  
— But see, Ulysses comes.

Enter ULYSSES and POLYXENA.

Ul. Behold the beautiful young virgin, Pyrrhus,  
Decreed t' appease your angry father's ghost.

Pyr. Now heav'n assist me, while I pay these last  
Sad duties to my great and worthy father.—

Talthybius, bid the army all be silent.

Tal. Ye Greeks, these sacred rites require your  
silence.

[Here PYRRHUS takes POLYXENA in one  
hand, and a goblet of wine in the other.

Enter PISISTRATUS.

Pis. Hold, Pyrrhus, if you would preserve your  
own,  
Save this young virgin's life; or know, thou  
haughty  
Imperious youth, I wear a sword, that can  
Revengc its master's wrongs. Beware, and promise,  
That

## The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 27

That you'll not prosecute your cruel purpose,  
Or life and breath's not thine.—The mistress, whom  
My soul thinks half her self, she must not, can not,  
And will not part with. Then desist, and render  
The virgin back to me, or by the Gods  
(Witnesses to your inhumanity) I swear,  
I'll sheath this ponyard in your villain's breast.

*Pyr.* Why offer you this violence, thou rash,  
Unthinking prince: Know that your rage misses  
Th' intended mark, and turns upon it self:  
Your anger is to me, as arrows shot  
Against some rock; which may break their own force,  
But ne'er can hurt th' impenetrable stone.

*Pis.* *Pyrrhus*, no more.—Or you, or I must die.—  
She shall not thus be lost.—I'll rescue her,  
Or boldly meet my death in the attempt.—  
What's life without her? On her smiles I live;  
By her I move; she is the soul that actuates me;  
Without her I should be but half my self,  
And at her death my better part is lost.  
Dare then to meet the fury of my sword.—

*Pisistratus* once dead, *Polyxena*  
May be thy father's victim; but while he  
Draws vital air, you'll claim her but in vain.  
Answer me with your sword, or death expect  
From th' hands of th' injur'd *Pisistratus*.

[*Pisistratus* offers to kill *Pyrrhus*.]

*Agamemnon* holds his arm.

*Aga.* Hold; I command thee hold, *Pisistratus*.  
What mean you by this outrage?—What wou'd your  
Violent rage have done?—Here guards, quick seize  
This mutinous young prince, and well secure him.

[guards seize *Pisistratus*.]

*Pis.* Unhand me, villains.—O *Polyxena*!—  
Stay, let me speak to *Agamemnon* then.—  
O Great *Atrides*, O let me conjure you  
By your dead father's shade, and by your hopes  
Of future greatness in your son *Onestes*,

## 28 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Deny me not a last embrace ; remember  
The pangs of love you felt, when fair *Chryseis*  
Was hurry'd from your arms : let the remembrance  
Of your own love raise pity in your breast,  
And move you to compassionate my pains.

*Aga.* Guards, speedily convey him hence. Away.

*Pis.* Gods ! what not grant me one, not one  
embrace ?

Infections blast thee ! All the wrath of heav'n  
Fall heavy on thy head ! — May all the curses,  
Which the Gods have in store for the unmerciful,  
Be heap'd upon thee. — But farewell, bright maid,  
How can I live without thee, how survive thee ? —  
Rogues, let me go ; where will you drag me to ?

[guards drag him out.

*Pyr.* Thou son of *Peleus*, my deceased father,  
Receive these our libations, which we offer

[pouring out the wine.

In honour of thy sacred memory ;  
And let the virgin, which we sacrifice,  
Obsequious to thy will, appease the anger  
Of thy incensed shade. — O be propitious  
To us ; grant us a safe and quick return  
Unto our native country. —

*Pol.* Ye Greeks, and Warriors, hear my dying  
words. —

I willingly can bid adieu to life. —  
But O by all the Gods I do conjure you,  
Let me not die in chains a slave, a captive ;  
O let me not descend to *Pluto's* realms  
So basely ; let not *Priam's* daughter fall  
So low. —

*Aga.* 'Tis granted. Then bind not the victim.  
Let us be merciful ev'n while we're cruel.  
She's mis'rable enough. Let us not heap  
Unnecessary tortures on the wretched.

*Pol.* I've bore the worst, and have no more to  
fear. —

Slav'ry

Slav'ry or Death ! Which shou'd I choose ? — To  
serve

Is base, dishonourable, and beneath me. —  
To die's the lot of all ; and to die bravely  
The glory of the great. — Then welcome death !  
I know its form : and what we know, we fear not. —  
I've seen the horror of it ; when, surrounded  
By enemies, I saw my country burnt,  
My kindred and my aged father bleed.  
I've try'd the terrors of approaching death,  
Calm and serene I've learnt to brave 'em all ;  
And without these death of itself is nothing. —  
My parent's grief alone makes my death bitter :  
Cou'd it be hid from her I'd bless my murd'lers ;  
I'd come with open arms t' embrace the hour,  
The happy hour in which grim death did close me  
In his cold iron arms. — But O ! with sorrow  
Behold the suff'rings of a wretched mother ;  
As ye are brave be good and merciful.  
When *Hecuba* hereafter shall in tears  
Ask for my body of you, restore it her,  
Nor ask a ransom ; while 'twas in her pow'r,  
She did redeem her dead son's corps with gold ;  
But now let pray'rs supply the place of gold ;  
For pray'rs and tears is all that she can give. —  
Now strike the fatal blow. — I am prepar'd  
For present death. Man's tyranny is spent  
In vain on me. — I have a soul, which fear  
Cou'd never touch ; which death cou'd never fright.  
Pyr. By heav'n's such courage shewn in such  
distress

Distracts my soul, and stops my trembling hand,  
Ev'n when my sword is entring at her breast. —  
Well then ! If I shou'd save her life, I spare  
A nobler soul than ever yet did warm  
The breast of a Barbarian : but then  
I shall dishonour the most valiant  
And bravest Heroe, and the best of fathers,

Who

## 30 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Who with unequal'd courage has encounter'd  
So many dangers, bore so many hardships,  
And all for us ; yes, all in the defence  
Of us and of our country.—Shall I value more  
The daughter of an hostile king, than him,  
Who was the sole protector and defender  
Of *Greece* against the insult of its foes ?  
No, that wou'd be most vile ingratitude,  
A crime abominated by the Gods,  
And virtuous men ; then let me thus avoid it.

[*Stabs POLYXENA.*

O great *Achilles*, as we have obey'd  
Your dread commands, so also hear our pray'rs,  
And O ! obstruct not our return to *Greece*.

*Aga.* *Talthybius*, haste ; bid *Hecuba* to give  
Sepulchral honours to *Polyxena*. —  
Come, princes, haste we to the camp. Let us  
Prepare to sail. — [exeunt.

Enter *PISISTRATUS* and *PYRRHUS* from opposite  
doors.

*Pis.* Dare you behold the face of your wrong'd  
friend ?

*Pyr.* *Pisistratus*, you have unjustly sought  
My life.

*Pis.* — You have unjustly ta'en my life.

*Pyr.* How have I injur'd you ?

*Pis.* — You need not ask it.

You've wrong'd me in my love.—Did you not know  
*Polyxena* reign'd tyrant of my heart ?

*Pyr.* What is the brave *Pisistratus* a slave ?  
Nay worse, a woman's slave ?

*Pis.* — Do not provoke me,  
Lest you shou'd soon be made repent your rashness.

*Pyr.* What do you menace me ? — Well ! know  
then, stripling,

That I despise your threats. — I laugh at you.

*Pis.* Villain be silent, lest your tongue shou'd prove  
Your

# The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 31

Your curse, and draw your ruin on your head.

*Pyr.* See the boy fret himself,

*Pis.* —— Gods! Must I bear it?

*Pyr.* Your anger is my scorn.—You know, you dare  
As well encounter red-hot thunderbolts,  
Or war against the angry king of heav'n,  
As meet the thirsty fury of my sword.

*Pis.* What did you say I dare not?

*Pyr.* —— Yes, you dare not.

*Pis.* Thus let me prove you have bely'd me then.

*Pyr.* Nay, then I must defend myself. [draws.

*Pis.* Come on. [draws.

[they fight.

Enter AGAMEMNON interposing.

*Aga.* What *Pyrrhus* and *Pisistratus*! No more.  
What do you do? Put up your swords again,  
And let me join your hands and make you friends.

*Pis.* No, by the Gods he surg'd me so, I cannot  
So soon forgive him.

*Pyr.* —— Go, and shew your spleen  
And make yourself contemptible.—The son  
Of Great *Achilles* knows not how to fawn,  
And bend to others passion.—I contemn thee. [exit.

*Aga.* What is it, that has thus enrag'd you both?

*Pis.* My disturb'd mind won't suffer me to tell  
you.—

Let me retire to my tent. [exeunt severally.

Enter HE CUBA, IRIA, and BECILLA.

*Bec.* O cease this sorrow, and surrender not  
Yourself to grief; but rather thank the Gods,  
That you once had your daughter, that she did  
so long

Live here to comfort you; for 'twas the bounty  
Of the great Gods, that first did give her to you.  
Death is the law of nature; all submit  
Sooner or later to its fatal stroke:

This

32 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

This was the time, when Jove was pleas'd she shou'd

Be added to the number of the shades,  
That dwell in blest Elysium ; therefore  
Don't persevere in obstinate condolement ;  
It shews a mind weak and dissatisfy'd  
With the decree of Jove, a restless mind,  
That cannot acquiesce in what's determin'd  
By the immutable and fix'd resolves  
Of the mighty King of Heav'n.

*Hec.* Prithee no more.

The counsel, which thou giv'st, does but increase  
My sorrows. O talk not of patience to me.  
Is not my daughter dead ? — Can I be patient ?  
Go preach it to the winds ; go bid 'em cease to blow ;  
Go bid the waves be still, and they'll obey you  
Much sooner than my troubled soul. True, reason  
Teaches, that tears cannot restore my daughter  
To life, when once the vital spirit's fled :  
Yet tho' we arm our selves with all our courage,  
Such sudden shocks throw judgment from our breasts,  
And then those passions, to which human nature  
Is always subject, rule our hearts, and make us  
Shed tears in the extreme anguish of our souls.

*Ir.* Be not dejected, Madam, but yet hope,  
That time will be the cure of all our griefs.

*Hec.* Why shou'd I feed my self with such vain  
hopes

Of things impossible ? — No ; let me now despair :  
Hope is for fools, and I'll have none of it ;  
But seek some lonesome cell to lay me down  
And breath my last in. — Come, thou mother Earth,  
Receive me to thy bosom ; thus I'll lay,  
And in despair will pine my life away. [lies down.]

Enter TALTHYBIUS.

*Tal.* Can you instruct me, O ye Trojan dames,  
Where wretched *Hecuba* is to be found ?

*Bes.*

## The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 33

*Bec.* See, see, *Talchybius* on the earth she lies  
Now equal'd with the meanest of mankind,  
Who once was thought the greatest!

*Tal.* See, Fortune, what thou'rt done! O see,  
how low

You have reduc'd the queen of mighty *Troy*!  
O Jove, d'you live, and see, and suffer this?  
Is this the consort of Great *Priamus*,  
The mighty Monarch dreaded by his foes?  
Is this the mother of that valiant *Hector*,  
Who dar'd to combat with the great *Achilles*?  
Gods! What a change is here! A lofty palace  
For th' open air, where she's expos'd to all  
The roughness and inclemency of weather!  
Rich gaudy purple beds for the cold earth!  
Her soft and downy pillows chang'd for dust  
And stones, on which she lays, but cannot rest  
Her wretched head! — But hold; I must perform  
The orders of our chief. — Ho! *Hecuba*,  
Awake, arise, and listen to me well,  
While I impart what does concern thee near.

*Hec.* Who is't, that thus disturbs my rest?

*Tal.* I come an herald from the *Grecian* army,  
To tell you the commands of *Agamemnon*.

*Hec.* [rising.] What have the *Greeks* decreed, that  
I shou'd die?

Thus murder once will be an act of goodness:  
Tis this alone can make me bless the *Greeks*,  
To free me from this tedious load of care,  
And to transfer me to an happier mansion,  
Where I shall with my *Priam*, and my valiant  
Son *Hector* in th' *Elysian* fields enjoy  
A lasting bliss; where cruel *Greeks* shall ne'er  
Disturb us more, nor shall we dread the fierce  
*Achilles'* name, nor *Diomed'e*'s approach,  
Nor daily tremble for our country's safety,  
Nor mourn our children's loss, nor *Troy*'s destruction;  
Be freed from servitude, and in delights

34      THE ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Ever renewing spend the joyous hours ;  
For tho' the great these worldly goods possess,  
The wretched have in view a nobler happiness. —  
Come haste and lead me to my destin'd death.

*Tal.* Far diff'rent is the message, which I bring,  
From what you seem t' expect. — Your daughter's  
blood

Has now appeas'd the Heroe's angry shade :  
The chief descended from great *Atreus'* race  
Sends me to tell you, that you may perform  
Funeral rites in honour of your daughter.

*Hec.* I'll hope no more, for all my hopes are  
vain.

Ah ! My *Polyxena* ! Then art thou gone ?  
The stroke of Death alone cou'd separate us ;  
And that alone can make us meet again. —  
O cruel Death to rob me of my daughter !  
But O kind Death to send me to my daughter !  
Cruel and kind ! I hate thee, yet wish for thee.

*Tal.* Cease this immod'rate grief, thou wretched  
mother ;  
She has done nothing, that's unworthy of  
Her noble father, and his royal race :  
She dy'd, as did become her quality ;  
She shew'd such courage, as did well befit  
The daughter of a king. When *Pyrrhus* held  
His trembling sword pointing towards her breast,  
She smil'd and left the world calm, undisturb'd.

*Hec.* Thy gen'rous and brave death, my daughter,  
brings  
Some comfort to my afflicted heart to see,  
That great souls keep their virtue to the last,  
In spite of all the shocks of adverse fortune ;  
Ev'n like a sturdy oak, that stands unmov'd  
Against th' impetuous force of the fierce north-  
wind's

Most vehement blasts ; so does a noble soul  
Bear up against the threatening storms of fortune,

And

And rises still superior to 'em all. —

Tal. Say, *Hecuba*, what answer shall I make *Atrides*?  
Why do you not prepare to give due honours  
To your deceased daughter? —

Hec. — Beg the *Greeks*  
That they would let the virgin's body lay  
Untouch'd by vulgar and prophane hands.

[exit *TALTHYBIUS*.]

Ir. Shall I go fetch the dear remains of the  
Deceased virgin hither? —

Hec. — Go, good *Iria* ;  
And let us wash her tender limbs, which now  
Are all polluted, and defil'd with blood. [exit *IRIA*.]

Hec. O see to what a wretched state the house  
Of *Priam* is reduc'd! — Must I remember  
My former happy state? And for what reason  
I was depriv'd of it? — O heav'n and earth!  
O that accursed hour, in which I bore  
*Paris*, the bane of mighty *Ilium*,  
That lustful youth, who for a foreign beauty  
Consum'd his country, and who was the cause  
Of a long ten years war, of *Troy*'s destruction,  
Of my captivity and all my troubles:  
It was for him that *Hector* fought so bravely,  
It was for him, that he withstood the shock  
Of his o'erpow'ring foes; for him at last  
He fell beneath the heav'n-assisted arm  
Of great *Achilles*. — Hah! Methinks I see  
The envious *Pyrrhus* rush into the temple!  
He stains the altar of Olympian *Jove*  
With good *Priam*'s sacred drops of blood. —

Bec. Madam, add not imaginary ills  
To your so num'rous real ones; let not  
The sad remembrance of your former troubles  
Swell up your mind, your restless mind with grief.

Hec. O no more, good *Becilla*, I can't hear thee.

[pauses.]

Heav'ns! what a scene of horror then appear'd

## 36 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Before my frightened eyes, that dreadful night,  
 In which (the king of *Troy*) great *Priam* fell !  
 Then at that fatal hour the glories of  
 The *Trojan* nation vanish'd, and were lost,  
 Like to a pleasing dream, or as I've seen  
 The glaring rays of the resplendent sun  
 Eclipsed by some intervening cloud,  
 And darken'd from our sight ; then fell the rich,  
 And mighty prince ; then *Priam* met his fate. —  
 But why shou'd I call *Priam* rich and mighty,  
 Who was so poor and mean in happiness ?  
 That man alone is rich, who, free from strife,  
 Leads a contented and a quiet life.  
 Let none a great condition happy call ;  
 The greater height you climb, the lower is your fall.

[Exeunt.]

Enter *PISISTRATUS* immediately.

*Pis.* The greater height you climb, the lower is  
 your fall !  
 'Tis true indeed : I find it in my self.  
 To th' highest pitch of love I rose ; from thence  
 My fall is more conspicuous, more dreadful. —  
 I taught my self to make *Polyxena*  
 The only theme to fix my wandring thoughts. —  
 In her all my hopes of happiness were center'd.  
 And now she's lost, all's misery before me. —  
 While she yet liv'd, I saw, I lov'd, I hop'd ;  
 My love flow'd smoothly on, and I was happy :  
 But at her death, the fire beforc half-smother'd  
 Blazes and rages in my breast more furiously.  
 So when some river's course is stop'd, the tide  
 O'erflows, or forces thro' the way deny'd ;  
 And tho' before its stream was slow and faint,  
 The swelling surge grows mighty by restraint.

*The End of the third Act.*

ACT



## A C T IV. SCENE I.

POLYXENA's *Body in view.*

Enter PISISTRATUS.

Pif. O'ER FLOW my eyes with tears ! Weep  
rivers out. —

Let me devote my self to grief, despair. —  
Thus will I gaze with sorrow on this fight,  
This fight of horrour : here I'll curse the hand,  
The cruel hand, that ravish'd from my arms  
My soul's much dearer part. — Inhuman *Greeks*,  
Next turn your swords on me ; you ne'er will find me  
So apt and willing to resign my breath,  
As at this present moment. — Take my life ;  
But yet you need not, you have done't already ;  
Yes, you've ta'en more than life. — If I had been  
Your greatest *Enemy*, you'd hurt me more,  
Ev'n more than malice, than revenge cou'd wish.

[looking at the *Body*.]

Tho' dead and cold, yet charming. — Let me enjoy  
One last embrace : Sure *Agamemnon* won't  
Sternly forbid it now ; tho' cruelty  
Before had steel'd his heart, and made him deaf  
To all that I requested. — [embraces the *Body*.]  
— Oh ! she is dead, and never, never knew,  
How much I lov'd : for had she known my pains,  
She wou'd have pity'd me, and sure have bless'd me :  
But yet she knows it now ; for death's pow'r can

Sep'rate

38 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Sep'rate alone, but not reduce to nothing  
Her ever-living soul : 'tis now the fees  
My passion was unfeign'd, my love unequal'd. —  
O cursed *Pyrrhus* ! Gods I shall run mad ! —  
I'll go and seek him, reek my vengeance on him.  
His blood will satisfy me, make me pour out  
My soul in ease, and meet Death with a smile. [exit.

*SCENE changes.*

*POLYDORÉ's Body brought in on a bier.*

*Enter IRITA and BECILLA.*

*Ir.* One woe succeeds another ; new misfortunes  
Grow e'ry moment, and augment themselves,  
And fall with an united force upon  
The head of wretched *Hecuba*.

*Bec.* O stop those harsh, and most tremendous  
words.

*Ir.* A dreadful message must she hear, of which  
I am th' unwilling messenger ; but mortals  
Do seldom bear one grief alone ; and when  
Sorrows oppress our minds, they rush on us  
Not singly, but in legions.

*Enter HECUBA.*

Madam, alas ! prepare yourself to hear  
Most heavy tidings from an heavy heart.

*Hec.* No horrid face of sorrow's new to me :  
I've bore so long, that I'm inur'd to suffer.  
Nothing can make me more unhappy, than  
The troubles, which I've undergone : no ills,  
Which *Jove* can send on me, will e'er seem strange,  
All *Hecuba*'s hopes the Gods have frustrated ;  
Her lot on earth is nothing, but misfortune.

*Ir.* You've lost your child.

*Hec.* What do you tell me of *Cassandra*'s fate ?

*Ir.*

## The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 39

*Ir.* Your fears interpret wrong.—Thus undeceive  
yourself [opens the Body.]

*Hec.* O what! My *Polydore*! My son! Thus  
snatch'd

From these desiring eyes, ev'n in thy bloom!  
What! Are you gone? For ever gone? But I,  
Abandon'd, desolate, alone am left

To mourn thy loss.—While all my other sons  
Were kill'd by the destructive hand of *Greece*,  
I comforted my self, and often said,

Yet there's one left: Great *Polymnestor*'s court  
Too did I think a place of refuge for me,  
To shield me from my enemies, and grant  
Me succour and relief in all my sorrows.—

But see how vain the hopes of mortals are!  
Upon what weak foundations grounded, and  
How often frustrated and disappointed!—

Where found you him? How was he kill'd? By  
whom?

*Ir.* I found him on the shore, driv'n up and  
down

By the inconstant winds, and swelling seas.

*Hec.* O matchless woe! ——————

The dreadful visions, that disturb'd my rest,  
Shew'd me a faint resemblance of his loss.

O 'twas the cursed villain *Polymnestor*,  
That dog of *Thrace* (man is too good a name)

That treacherously murder'd this my son.—

Cou'd he then stain with blood these tender limbs?

And cou'd he thrust his hateful spear into

This tender breast, and have no touch of pity?—

But what will not the love of cursed gold

Excite a man to do? This is the cause

Of murder, rapine, sacrilege, rebellion;

This drives out from our breasts remorse of con-  
science,

And sets us ev'n below the beasts of th'earth. [exeunt.]

Enter

Enter PISISTRATUS *solo*.

O cursed arm ! Why didst thou err, and not  
Reach the vile traytor's heart ? Heav'n's ! I'm  
distracted ! —

What taste have I for all the sweets of life,  
Absent from her I love ? All pleasures, which  
The universe affords, seems dull and languid.  
All, which the world does call delightful, loses  
With me its sweetness; since that, which would make  
Me relish all the joys of life, is gone. —  
Absent from her, not musick's charms can please ;  
And harmony seems most discordant to me. —  
Farewel unpleasant world ; I am a member  
Divided from thy body. — But, *Atrides*.

Enter AGAMEMNON.

*Aga.* Pisistratus, how is't, that I observe  
Thy visage thus disconsolate ? Thy looks  
Tell me, thy heart is swollen high with grief.

*Pis.* My heart's sole joy is lost. No hopes of  
comfort  
Can ease me, now *Polyxena* is gone :  
With her is all my nat'r'nal gayety  
Of temper banish'd, never to return.

*Aga.* Spend not a moment's thought on her,  
young prince ;  
At your return to *Greece* some royal dame  
Shall meet your wishes, crown your joy, and soon  
Bury in dark oblivion the charms  
Of *Priam*'s captive daughter.

*Pis.* O never, *Agamemnon*, shall I lose  
The dear remembrance of that lovely maid.

*Aga.* Wou'd one believe, that love cou'd so dis-  
figure  
A soldier's warlike soul ? — How art thou chang'd  
From that *Pisistratus*, which I admir'd,  
Riding thro' all the ranks, and animating

His

# The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 41

His soldiers courage by his own bright example?  
Then fir'd with a love of glory led  
His conqu'ring troops against the trembling foe?—  
Dispel these gloomy thoughts, and grieve no more  
For a lost captive mistress. — Come, away.  
I see your soul is harrass'd and fatigued  
By this immod'rate grief, and asks refreshment.—  
Haste to your tent. Drown in forgetfulness  
All your past troubles. — Come, delay no longer.

[exit PISISTRATUS.

## Enter HE CUBA.

HEC. O Agamemnon, I'm thy wretched suppliant,  
And on my knees I beg you wou'd redress  
The mighty wrongs I bear. —

AGA. —— What is't you'd ask?

HEC. Grief stops my mouth. — O grant it me,  
And ease the hardships of a servile life. —  
D'you see this child, whose fate I now lament?

AGA. I see it. ——

HEC. —— This is (Why do I say it is?)  
This was my son, the only one, that did  
Survive the fate of fallen Ilium.

AGA. Where was he, when your city was destroy'd?

HEC. T' avoid th' impending danger he was sent  
By his father to a foreign land, entrusted  
With Polymnestor, king of these dominions.  
The good old man sent with his Polydore  
An immense treasure to the king of Thrace,  
Who impiously murdered this child  
(His weak and tender arm not able yet  
To wield the sword, or lift the pond'rous shield),  
And threw the breathless body on the shore,  
There to be driyen by the boist'rous waves  
Unbury'd, unlamented. —

AGA. —— O cursed desire  
Of gold! O harden'd mercenary villain!  
O thou unhappy woman! —

G

HEC.

Hec. ———— Hear my tale.

After that *Polydore* had been entrusted  
In th' hands of this his wicked guardian,  
Oft did the king of *Thrace* visit our court.—  
The sacred vow he made there I'll relate,  
If in my memory it lives.

One day old *Priam* led the *Thracian* king  
To th' altar of Olympian *Jove*, and said,  
“ Swear by the God, under whose roof we stand,  
“ That you'll be faithful to your trust, that you'll  
“ Be mindful of my son, that you'll preserve him  
“ From all his *Græcian* foes, that seek his life,  
“ That you will succour me in my distress.  
“ Swear this, and as thou dost perform thy vow,  
“ So may heav'n bless and prosper all thy actions.”

Then thus the *Thracian* King: “ O mighty *Jove*,  
“ And all the heav'nly pow'rs, be witnesses  
“ To this my sacred vow. If e'er I violate  
“ The laws of hospitality, if I  
“ Shall e'er deny my kind assistance to  
“ Great *Priam*'s house; then may the righteous Gods,  
“ Then may just heav'n shew'r all the curses on me,  
“ That e'er were sent on perjur'd, guilty heads.”  
And yet this man, this wicked, faithless man,  
Murder'd with bloody hands this helpless child.

*Aga.* Ye Gods, your vengeance is requir'd to keep  
In awe a bold, offending, guilty world.—  
Where kings transgress, the Gods alone must punish;  
Why then, O *Jove*, do you not lift your thunder,  
And spend it on this *Thracian* tyrant's head?

Hec. O *Agamemnon*, call him not a king,  
Who is unworthy of the rule he bears.  
A king! Inhospitable, base, a murd'rer.  
Shall greatness then protect his crimes? No; rather  
Let him endure the more, that he's abus'd  
The pow'r entrusted in his impious hands.—  
True, I am weak; but then the heav'nly pow'rs  
Are strong, and will at last exert their force

In

In punishing the perjur'd, and despisers of  
Their justice ; and altho' they long escape  
Th' avenging hand of heav'n, yet at length  
A certain punishment succeeds their crimes.

Then *Agamemnon* imitate the Gods :

Do justice to the injur'd, and revenge  
The contumelies offer'd to the innocent.

These were the paths trod by the Demi-gods.

By actions such as these, the earthly Heroes  
Reach'd to the realms of light, and mix'd with  
Gods. —

O view me, pity me ; paint my misfortunes  
In your own breast, then see how great they are ;  
And thy heart will bleed to see thy fellow creature  
So miserable. —

*Aga.* Thou wretched *Hecuba*, with sorrow do  
I hear thy mournful tale. Know, that I'm willing  
To punish this fell murderer, but that —

*Hec.* But what ? O heavens ! He denies me. —  
And can you let that mass of villainy,  
That perjur'd hateful *Thracian* 'scape unpunish'd ?

*Aga.* The *Grecians* think this man their constant  
friend. —

*Hec.* Then they're deceiv'd, and therefore shou'd  
rejoice

At their deceiver's punishment. —

For can that man who has broke his faith to one  
Be a true friend to any ? —

*Aga.* His infidelity to you won't prove  
Him false to *Greece*, but rather will confirm  
Th' unthinking crowd in their ill-grounded notion,  
That he is constant to their interests.

Then leave his punishment to those great Gods,  
Who with impartial hands distribute justice :  
And never think that he escapes unpunish'd,  
Whose mind is conscious of such horrid crimes,  
As day wou'd blush to look on. — He now bears

## 44 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

His judge, his witness, his tormentor too  
In his own breast.— The Gods redress your wrongs.

*Hec.* No, no, my soul is all revenge; 'tis sweeter  
Than life or liberty; no meaner care  
Shall now invade my breast.— My soul thirsts for  
This cruel tyrant's blood.— Great Gods, grant me  
To sacrifice this barb'rous *Thracian*  
To *Polydore*'s much-injur'd ghost, and then  
To die in ease. I ask no more, ye Gods.—

*Atrides*, then I beg not your assistance,  
But only your permission; if you won't  
Redress my wrongs, but yet for love of justice  
Hinder me not in the pursuit of my  
Most just revenge; if *Polymnestor* die  
By *Hecuba*'s hand, let *Hecuba* alone—  
Bear all the blame of it. If the *Greeks* seek  
My life, I care not: For when I shall have  
Reveng'd my son, I have no more to do,  
But die contentedly. Now leave the rest  
To a woman's conduct and contrivances.

*Aga.* What will you do? How can you e'er expect  
A poor weak woman shou'd o'ercome a man?  
What strength have you to perfect your designs?

*Hec.* Within I have some *Trojan* captive women;  
The justice of their cause will make 'em strong,  
And more than female.—  
O good *Atrides*, safe conduct my servant  
Thro' th' army; and heav'n reward you for it.  
And let the body of *Polyxena*  
Yet lay unmoy'd, 'till I shall send for it;  
That one flame may consume my double care  
Her, and her brother *Polydore*.

*Aga.* —————— Be't so  
For we must wait a prosp'rous gale of wind.

*Hec. Bucilia,* haste to *Polymnestor*'s tent.  
Tell him, that *Hecuba* desires his presence,  
Matters t' impart of great importance to him.

Mean

# The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 45

Mean while I will go in, and there contrive  
The death of him, that is not fit to live.

[exeunt HE CUBA, IRIA, BECILLA.

Enter TALTHYBIUS.

Tal. O Great *Atrides*, young *Pisistratus* —

Aga. Ha! Hah! What say'ft of him, *Talthybius*?

Tal. Has stabb'd himself. —

Aga. — When? Where?

Tal. As I pass'd by his Tent, I heard a groan,  
At which affrighted, unawares I enter'd,  
And found him pale, and bloody, wounded in  
A mortal part; groaning a second time,  
Some others straight came rushing in, and bear him  
This way to set him in your sight, *Atrides*.  
Hither they bring their most unwelcome load.

Enter two or three, bringing in PISISTRATUS.

Aga. O woeful sight! Distemper to my eyes!  
O hapless prince! What means this act of rashness?  
Pis. Great *Agamemnon*, surely my misfortunes  
May claim your pity, not deserve reproach.  
Think, who it was, that brought this rashness on me.  
For by the fatal wound, *Polyxena* receiv'd,  
Wretched *Pisistratus* despair'd and dy'd.

Aga. O 'tis too true! *Pisistratus*, forgive me.

Pis. Good friends, disturb me not in my last  
moments.

Let me employ my thoughts on her, I lov'd,  
And I'll expire in extasy, in joy,  
My soul's delight! We'll meet among the shades  
below,

And there enjoy our loves uninterrupted. —

I feel my soul is flying to its bliss. —

O charming maid, I come, I follow thee. [dies.

Aga. Gods! I can't bear it. — Why did I yield up  
*Polyxena*? Why did I hearken to  
Greece's Requests so inconsiderately?

Now

46 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Now would I fain revoke my rash decree. —  
But that no mortal pow'r can do ; none can  
Recall the time, that's past, the action's done.  
A King may take, but cannot give a life. —  
After that by the deadly sword they've broke  
The thread of life ; after the soul has fled  
To the pale shades of dreary *Erebus*,  
None can recall it thence. — Ye Monarchs, then  
Learn first to weigh th' event of all your actions,  
Before that you determine aught ; for time  
Will ne'er ebb back, will ne'er return again,  
But still keeps on its course irrevocable.  
So when descending showers leave the sky,  
Prone down to earth they fall, on earth they lie ;  
Where first they fell to, there will yet remain,  
And ne'er rise upwards to the heav'ns again.

*The End of the fourth Act.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

*Enter IRIA and BECILLA.*

*Ir.* **T**HE Queen just now is in a frantick fit  
Gone down to the Sea shore, to that same  
place,  
Where the dead corps of *Polydore* was found,  
And there bewails his fate ; curses the impious  
*Thracian*,  
And calls for vengeance on his wickedness :  
Pleases herself to hear the echoing rocks  
Join her complaints, and seem to mourn with her. —  
When she in plaintive accents tells her grief,

La-

Lamenting that her *Polydore*'s no more ;  
 The rocks too answer, *Polydore*'s no more :  
 And when she says, O *Themis* come revenge  
 My wrongs on hated *Polymnestor*, they too  
 Seem suppliants to the Gods, that they'd revenge  
 Her wrongs on *Polymnestor*. This delights her ;  
 She blesses 'em, and calls 'em kind for it :  
 She thinks, that her complaints melt 'em to pity,  
 And kind condolment of her miseries.

*Ber.* If any prince thinks, that his state is firm,  
 Nor subject to the changes of this life ;  
 Let him behold th' unhappy state of *Troy*,  
 And its despairing queen : there let him learn  
 Not to depend upon the transient joys  
 And smiles of fortune : let him well consider,  
 That he now stands in that same place, from whence  
 The wretched queen of *Ilium* fell. — Her sorrows  
 May be compar'd with those of *Niobe* ;  
 Yet *Niobe* deserv'd whate'er she suffer'd ;  
 Her children's loss was a just punishment  
 To her pride ; when she compar'd herself to the  
 Fair mother of *Apollo* and *Diana*.  
 But *Hecuba* is overwhelm'd in  
 Tempestuous seas of dire calamities :  
 Nor did her guilt ever provoke the Gods  
 T' inflict such miseries. — But hold, I think  
 It is not meet, that she be left alone,  
 Lest her immod'rate sorrow force her to  
 Commit some act of violence on herself. [exeunt.

Enter POLYMNESTOR.

*Hecuba* send for me ! — For what ? — What can  
 She want ? — *Hecuba* ! Methinks I dread the name.  
 Why do I tremble thus ? What fear ? A woman ! —  
 What can she hurt me in ? — But O ! my conscience  
 Tells me, how much I've wrong'd this *Hecuba*. —  
 What tho' I hide my crime from all mankind ?  
 I can't conceal it from my self, and heav'n. —

My

My conscience is a witness to my guilt,  
 And still torments me tho' I should escape  
 All other punishment. — (But sure no punishment  
 Can be so great, as to be conscious, that  
 One has deserved it.) — And, O ! I dread  
 The Gods revenge upon my guilty head. —  
 In vain I try t' avoid pursuing guilt ;  
 Where e'er I fly, it still will follow me. —  
 Wretched in life, yet after death more wretched. —  
 How shall I show my head, and how be justify'd  
 Before th' impartial and all-seeing judges  
 Of th' actions of mankind ? — There will no false  
 Appearances e'er varnish o'er a crime,  
 And make it seem (as in this world it will)  
 Different from the truth ; can't make wrong right,  
 Black white, foul fair, lies truth, or baseness noble.  
 — But yet the Gods have mercy for offenders,  
 That ask it of 'em. — Then I'll pray ; but O !  
 My guilt so feeds upon my mind, and takes  
 Up all my soul, and cannot ask for pardon. —  
 What horrid crimes I'm conscious of ! I've murder'd  
 Him, whom I promis'd, nay and also touching  
 The altar swore, and call'd the Gods to witness,  
 That I wou'd ever succour. — Impious action !  
 Never to be atton'd for ! Never pardon'd ! —  
 O wretched guilty man ! Lost *Polymnestor* ! —  
 What mighty boon to gain did I commit  
 This horrid crime ? For Gold ! — What can gold do ?  
 Can't ease a troubled mind ? Or can it give  
 Content ? Or free me from the pointed stings of  
 A gnawing guilty conscience ? No. What pleasure  
 Can it afford me, that may counterpoize  
 The torment, which I bear, when I reflect  
 On the ill means, by which I first obtain'd it ? —  
 But hah ! See *Hecuba* ! O all ye Furies,  
 Give me a resolution, but to bear  
 The sight of her whom I have so much injur'd,  
 Without a change of countenance. — O let not

My

# The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 49

My confus'd looks discover that I'm guilty. —  
'Tis punishment enough, that I my self  
Am conscious of what I've done.

[walks about disorder'd

Enter HECUBA and BECILLA.

Hec. Ye Gods give strength to these my feeble  
hands ; [aside.

And crown my just designs with wish'd success ;  
That after ages may from hence be taught  
The fatal ills, that breach of trust attend. [aside.

Pol. What is't, that *Hecuba* would ask of me ?

Hec. Remember, *Polymnestor*, from my hands  
You once receiv'd a child, sprung from the root  
Of *Priam* bless'd in a num'rous offspring ;  
Tho now, alas ! the last surviving branch  
Of all that fertile stock. — My thoughts on him  
Employ my anxious days and watchful nights.  
Then let me know my doom, in knowing his :  
Say, if he lives.

Pol. —————— He lives.

Hec. —————— The gold entrusted  
By *Priam* to your care, is it yet safe ?

Pol. No hostile hand has ever robb'd me of it :  
Guarded it lies, untouched within my court.

Hec. For this good news much thanks to  
*Polymnestor*.

Pol. But what's the busines, that did require  
Mine and my children's presence here ?

Hec. —————— Hear me.

All the remaining wealth of *Ilium*  
(Which tho' it be small I'm willing to preserve)  
I wou'd entrust with thee, as thinking thee  
My good and faithful friend ; a man, that's firm  
And constant to his word, unmov'd, unbias'd  
By any views of interest. — Ye Gods !

How hard 'tis for me to dissemble thus ! [aside.

Pol. Where is this treasure hid ? — How is't  
conceal'd ?

H

Hec.

50 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

*Hec.* In the next tent the precious heap is plac'd,  
Unknown to the *Achaian* army. —

*Pol.* In what was then my children's presence  
needful?

*Hec.* That if a sudden unexpected death  
Shou'd overtake you, these may still remain  
Witnesses of the truth. — Come, haste we in,  
Receive the little treasure from my hands.

[*exeunt HEC. POL.*

*Manet BECILLA.*

*Bec.* See how he rushes on destruction ;  
How willingly he goes to meet his fate !  
Plung'd in an unexpected, unforeseen  
Aby's of miseries, the just reward  
Of his unequal'd crimes. — The Gods are just,  
And surely will with 'vengeful hands inflict  
A punishment well fitted to his villanies. —  
Death is too little : all the racks and tortures,  
That have been yet found out, are for less crimes :  
So daring a contempt of heaven's vengeance,  
And all that's sacred, sure requires a new  
Unheard of punishment. — But hark, it thunders.

[*thunders.*

Tremble ye guilty wretches, whose affrighted  
Souls dread the justice of the Heavn'ly Pow'rs :  
Let them whose monstrous villanies must fly  
The hated light ; let them alone be struck  
With horror and amazement at the thunder  
Of great Olympian *Jove* ; while we, whose souls  
Are pure, and stain'd with no such spots of vice,  
Remain, tho' ev'n the universe shou'd fall  
From its well-order'd state to wild confusion,  
Secure undaunted. — But see, *Iria* comes,  
And greets me with such pleasant Looks, as are  
The nat'ral consequence of success.

*Enter IRIA.*

*Ir.* Gods of revenge be still : your work is done.  
He'll see no more the cursed treasure, which

*He*

# The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 51

He murder'd *Polydore* to gain. —

*Bec.* — What, is he kill'd?

*Ir.* No, no; he lives depriv'd of light and comfort.  
When he came in eager with expectations,  
And glutted with the hopes of treasure, that  
His safety was the least of's care or thoughts;  
The band of *Trojan* women unsuspected  
Seiz'd him, and bound him fast. In this condition  
He saw his children strangled: while he sometimes  
Moan'd for his children's loss, then swell'd to rage,  
And curs'd the queen, the *Trojan* captives thrust  
An iron hot and burning from the fire  
Into his eye; the blood gush'd out; the ball  
Of sight straight follow'd it, and left its orb.  
This equal'd his pain t' his grief; the sorrow,  
He suffer'd for his children's death, was chang'd  
To an impatience of the raging torments,  
He bore by the avulsion of his eye-ball.  
Nor was this all he underwent; but then  
His other light, which yet remain'd untouch'd,  
By the same means was soon extinguished,  
And torn out from its seat. — See, where he comes;  
The captives have unbound him; hither he bends  
His wandring steps in tortures exquisite.

*Enter POLYMNESTOR blind, HECUBA following.*

*The Body of POLYDORE brought in on a bier.*

*Pol.* O curse on this revengeful sex! O hell?  
Turn all thy tortures on this bloody woman.  
Not heav'n has Gods of aspect more serene;  
Nor hell a soul more furious. —  
When she appears your friend, 'tis then she is  
Your greatest enemy, and while she smiles, destroys.  
— O torment, and extremity of anguish! —  
My children kill'd too! — Weep for 'em I cannot,  
Unless it be in blood. — I shall run mad  
With pain and tortures. — Where's this *Hecuba*?  
Let me come to her. — Let me tear her body.  
Nought but her life shall satisfy my rage. —

52 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

But hold. Where am I? — To whom do I speak?  
O *Phæbus* let no more thy cherishing rays  
Comfort this bloody-minded barb'rous creature;  
But dart contagion on her cursed head.—  
Gape, earth, and swallow her. Let her no more  
Enjoy the light, she has depriv'd me of.—  
Quick lightnings blast her and her hateful race.—  
O torments insupportable! — O Earth!  
O Heav'ns! O Gods! relieve me, bring assistance.  
*Hec.* Talk not of Heav'n and Gods, thou perjur'd  
mortal;  
Can you believe there are such things? — No rather  
Let your lips utter nothing, but of Hell,  
Of racks, and whips, and fires, and tortures us'd  
To punish such, such guilty souls as thine.

*Pol.* O cursed barb'rous woman, art thou there?  
Dar'ft thou to look on me, in th' innocent  
Blood of whose children thou'ft imbru'd thy hands?

*Hec.* Hold, *Polymnestor*, talk not so, consider  
It was not me, no but your wicked self,  
That bath'd their murd'ring hands in innocent blood.  
What I did, all was done in just revenge;  
What you bear, you deserve. Those very crimes,  
Of which you now accuse me, you yourself  
Alone are guilty. Thus in condemning  
Me you approve my justice, and confess,  
Your crimes are well rewarded, duly punish'd.

*Pol.* O 'tis too true! How deeply does she sting  
My wounded Conscience! — But Gods! Can I bear  
These sharp reproaches from a female slave? —  
No, I will be reveng'd, were 't only for  
My children's sake. — O *Agamemnon*, hear me;  
Punish the insolence of these your captives.

Enter AGAMEMNON.

*Aga.* What voice was that, which I heard echoing in  
The hollow rocks? —

*Pol.* — A man's, whose injuries  
Shou'd roar, ev'n while they shake the universe. —  
Behold

# The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 53

Behold *Atrides*, and behold with pity  
The great calamities, I suffer from  
The hands of captives, yes thy female captives ;  
*Hecuba* and her cursed band of *Trojans*.

*Aga.* What was it thy hand, *Hecuba*, that did  
This cruel, bloody action ? —

*Hec.* — Great *Atrides*,  
Condemn not what I've done, 'till you have heard  
The reason, why I did so. See the body  
Here of my murder'd child. — This was the work  
Of that fell villain. — Had he but his sight  
To see the blood he spilt, ev'n the remembrance  
Of that most horrid act wou'd make his soul  
Shiver and start with guilt. — He swore by th' Gods  
That he'd preserve this child ; yet for the sake  
Of cursed lucre basely murder'd him.

*Aga.* O *Polymnestor*, wicked perjur'd man,  
How cou'd you call on me for vengeance ?  
Did you believe, that I'd protect such crimes,  
As stain the Name of honour with a blot,  
Such as an harden'd villain 'd tremble at ?  
Dare you confess your crime ?

*Hec.* Since your sight cannot, let your touch  
condemn you. [puts *POLYDOR*'s *Body* into  
*POLYMNESTOR*'s arms.

*Pol.* What do I hold within my arms ? The corps  
Of murder'd *Polydore* ? — O Heav'n, forgive me ! —

*Aga.* Nay, if 't be so, then let his punishment  
Be now completed. —

*Pol.* — For the love of mercy  
Good *Agamemnon*, kill me not, I pray thee.

*Hec.* I'd have thee live. — To die's an happiness  
You don't deserve. — The person, that believes  
He's acted his severest part, when he  
Has for some monstrous crime bereav'd th' offender  
Of Life, han't learnt, and knows not how to be  
A tyrant. No, to live, and live in mis'ry,  
Shou'd be the punishment of the greater villains,  
Of *Polymnestor*'s. This is something worse than death,  
And

And what's still more, worse than the fear of death.  
I know't ; and of this truth I'm an example.

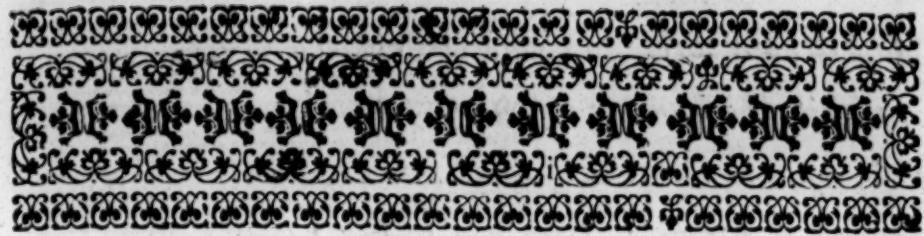
*Aga.* Then straight convey him to those unfrequented Mountains, that were witnesses of his guilt ; Whose tops are stain'd by the blood of *Polydore*. There let him spend the remnant of his days, With the remembrance of his former crimes To prey upon his soul, ev'n as the vulture Daily consumes the liver of *Prometheus*. There let him comfortless suffer the hardships Of cold and hunger, and at last there die Despairing ; without hopes of mercy after His impious life of the propitious Gods.

*Here see the justice of impartial Heav'n,  
To ev'ry one his due reward is giv'n.*

*Inscrutable the paths, unknown the ways,  
By which Great Jove his equity displays :  
But this we all agree in, this we know ;  
The vengeance of the Gods is certain, tho' 'tis slow.*

F I N I S.





T H E  
E P I L O G U E,

Design'd to have been Spoken.

*WHAT* strange unnat'ral thing these Poets write!  
Why I protest it is enough to fright  
A modern Belle, to see this moralizing,  
This whimsical young Author merely prizing  
A Lady for her Courage.—Out of nature!  
Refuse a prince's love, and think it better  
To die! — O monstrous! — But he'll say, I know,  
Such Ladies were two thousand Years ago, —  
But that won't down with a St. James's beau.  
By the old Laws of his Athenian Daddies,  
Thinks he to rule our Freeborn English Ladies?  
No, they'll insist on their Prerogative,  
Just as they please to love, and as they please to live.—

Had

## EPILOGUE.

*Had it been wrote to please the modern Stage,  
And hit the humour of the present Age,  
Polyxena enamour'd by his Charms,  
Instead of Death's, had fled to her Lover's Arms.*

*But hold — I came the Poet to defend. —  
He's young, and with encouragement may mend :  
Why then e'en save his Play : ne'er cast him down ;  
But give him time to better know the Town.*



